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THE RENAISSANCE OF JESUS

in

INDIA.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction.

"Whenever the world declineth in virtue and righteouness;and vice and injustice mount the throne - then cometh I,the Lord,and revisit my world in visible form,and mingleth as a man with men,and by my influence and teaching do I destroy the evil and injustice,and reestablish virtue and righteousness".

So stands it written,from time immemorial,in the Bhagavad Gita,the flower of Hindu wisdom.And the history of mankind reveals the fact that time and again when religion fell into abuse,when superstitions,immoralities and worldliness became the order of the day,when the national or international situation imperatively demanded a moral renewal,a great Man has appeared leading a spiritual awakening,a social upheaval, a religious revival.

A study of these periods of reformation reveals that they all have certain features in common,though they differ widely in conditions.Thus, they all arose at a time of depression in religious life;in each case the movement was not an isolated spiritual phenomenon;it was not solely religious.Usually there were powerful economic,political, or social factors in the situation operating both in the cause and in the effect of the reformation.Each movement represented a protest,a revolt,resulting in a new departure,a new order, or organization.Every movement began with a small group but widened in scope until it challenged the forces of organized religion of the time,affected the life of the nation,and finally became a world-wide movement that still persists.

A survey of the present conditions in the world seems to indicate a situation in many respects similar to those that brought about these great social and religious earthquakes.

Religion has certainly fallen on evil days.In many western countries Business has taken its place.Material prosperity has become the watchword.Material things instead of being the simple means of life,have become its end,its standard of measurement,its god."Money is King.Business is our God.Commerce rules.The Captain of industry....is the Captain of the souls of peoples."[1].Acquisition of wealth and power have become the ultimate goal of life.In Russia they have dispensed with all organized religion,and devote them themselves with 'religious' zeal to what they regard an ~~effi~~ efficient form of government,which is based on prosperity. The Protestant Church is divided into innumerable sects,and party strife and factional competition make it the laughing stock of heathendom,and a scandal to Christianity.Scepticism, unbelief,and agnosticism have become the order of the day. The age of Faith is gone.Doubts are raised in every branch of study,in every area of life.There is dogmatic denial of God in many a college classroom,in the teaching of a ~~ratiena~~ rationalistic science which is not only irreligious but unscientific as well.In psychology there are many mechanists who deny God,many reverent agnostics who have lost all faith, and a large number of students who are swept away by the tide

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1.Bok.Dollars Only.P.4.

of fashionable scepticism.In philosophy many have been led into unbelief by a left-wing Pragmatism tinctured with mechanistic Behaviourism,by positivism,or some form of naturalism or materialism.In the ranks of youth many have lost their intellectual anchorage or their moral standards and are openly drifting in dangerous waters.

The highly organized industrial system of this machine civilisation has brought unprecedented profits for a few and the dull mechanisation of life for the many.It not only tends to crush out the higher intellectual,aesthetic, and religious life of the workers,but it also creates a chasm between owners and wage earners,and also between work and leisure,so that men go out to seek exciting pleasures to offset the deadening routine of industry.This tends in many cases to the weakening of the family ties,or the break-up of the home.Concentration of enormous power in the hands of a few leads to serious unrest and industrial strife.The majority of the workers have no land,no home of their own, no tools,no security of life or employment.Poverty and unemployment are rapidly spreading all over the world. Crowded tenements,unsanitary surroundings,congested and demoralised family life,sickness,lawlessness and crime, child labour,ignorance and low mentality,masses sodden with misery and despair,starvation and breadlines - all cry out against our economic and social order.

And in the political sphere there is more bitterness resentment and misunderstanding than ever before. Oriental nations are frantically fighting for freedom and equality, opposing with all their forces the organized exploitation of Imperialism, Militarism, Industrialism and Capitalism of the Western nations. The latter, after a 'war to end war' have made a 'peace to end peace'. With all outward gestures of love and brotherhood they keep on adding to their armaments, 'gnarling at ech other's heels'.

In short the human society is today confronted by "economic perils due to gross inequality of privilege, with extreme luxury for some and dire physical need for many; ...international dangers arising out of the increasing destructiveness and deadliness of modern war, the growth of industrialism throughout the earth and consequent intensification of competition between the various nations for food, raw materials, markets and fields of investments, exaggerated and irresponsible nationalism; racial perils due to discrimination, exploitation, lynching and mob violence; political perils due to graft and corruption...; moral dangers due to crime and lawlessness,.....drug addicts, sordid commercialised amusements,.. .deterioration of the home..."[1]

The world has certainly declined in virtue and righteousness. Vice and injustice have mounted the throne. Time seems to be ready for the appearence of a prophet to

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1. Makers of Freedom. Page and Eddy. p.306.

lead a spiritual awakening,a social upheaval.Which way shall we look for the Man?Is he even now amongst us?Will it be said by a future generation 'Lo!a prophet was amongst them and they knew it not'?

Stanley Jones,that veteran missionary to India,than whom few foreigners understand that country better,has said "some of us feel that the next great spiritual impact upon the soul of the race is due to come by way of India".[1] Anyone acquainted with the history of India knows that her dominating characteristic has always been an aptitude for religion.From the dim distant dawn of civilisation the sons and daughters of India have been searching after Truth with a zeal unequalled by others,and that search has been continued to the present day.Theirs has never been the pursuit of Avarice,Ambition, and Material Power.Steadily they have kept their faces Heavenwards and explored many a winding path.Some have ended abruptly in dangerous mires;some led them on to steep precipices;some into wild waste lands.Yet others guided the weary way-farer higher and higher to the top of the hill. They discovered that

> Many paths there be
> To reach the mountain's height.
> But all who climb there see
> The same Moon's light.

But they did not stay satisfied with this discovery. Whenever a better,a newer way was pointed out to them they inquired into it and made use of it.Thus ,when the Aryans first entered India,they incorporated into their religious

1.Christ of The Indian Road.p.15.

system what was good in the religion of the aborginal tribes. Later on when Mohammadanism arrived in their midst, the Hindu genius assimilated it and brought out the Sikh religion.

Today India is unique in the fact that it is within her boundaries that all the religions of the world meet and mingle. Judaism is there, and Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammadanism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity and the vast conglomeration of religions called Hinduism. People of different races and nationalities, professing and practising with fanatic enthusiasm these various religions, live side by side, see the good and bad in one another, and gradually, unconsciously absorb from one another bringing about a slow but steady amalgamation. Verily India is the melting pot of religions.

For some time now Christianity has been in India, and has been working two ways. The seed sown by the Missionaries has grown, like the mustard seed, into a large tree sheltering many in the branches of it. The five million Christians and the Indian Church are the direct outcome of missionary activity. But Christianity has been working also like the leaven thrown into the bushel of meal, slowly, silently, but steadily from within. Great changes have been going on within the indigenous religions. It is this response of the indigenous faiths to Christianity that is attempted to trace herein, as the writer believes that a correct understanding and appreciation of this response is indispensable for Christian work in India.

Ever since Christianity came in contact with the Hindu religions India has been producing a new type of saintly scholars, men like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Gandhi, who remain Hindus in profession and practice of their religion and yet have a great deal in common with Christian idealists and saints. According to the standards of Western Christianity these men cannot be regarded Christians: they have not been baptised; they do not belong to any Christian Church; they do not even recognise Jesus as the only revelation of God. Hence they are easily outside the pale of organized christendom.

But today thinking men in the christian churches are rapidly becoming aware of the fact, that Christianity and the religion of Jesus are two different things." While plenty of preachers and church members still do Jesus the injustice and bring him the discredit of assuming that Christianity is his religion, the informed know that it is a composite into which went first the theology of Paul, then some things from the mystery cults and philosophies of Greece, together with others from the hero worship and imperial organization of Rome"[1].

With due consideration to this fact, and also a few others such as the political inferority complex towards adopting the religion of their conquerors, if an examination is made of the Hindu reaction to Christianity, it will be seen that the Hindus, true to their religious genius, are

1. Jesus's significance in our modern age. Ward. World Tomorrow January. 1931.

sifting out the essence of the religion of Jesus from the vast accumulation of ceremonial superfluities and pagan practices called Christianity,and trying to incorporate it into their own indigenous modes of worship.Jesus,freed from all the eccleciastical encumbrances looks extremely attractive to the essentially religious mind of India,which is rapidly absorbing His spirit and learning to understand and appreciate Him as an Oriental.That this process,a renaissance of Jesus,has been going on in India for some time and has come to a clear stage today in the Person of Gandhi,it is the humble hope of the following pages to suggest.In the West,where Christianity has become so highly saturated with Institutionalism and Intellectualism that it is in imminent danger of losing sight of the Spirit for orm on the one hand,and of replacing Faith and Worship by futile theological controversies on the other,Gandhi ,it need hardly be said,will not be approved of as a Christian.But to honest,clear,thinking he embodies,more than any other person in many a generation,the Spirit of the Great Galilean. He represents the highest in Hinduism also.Thus he combines in himself the best that is in these two religions .May it not be that he is the Divine Vehicle chosen to purge organised Christianity and organised Hinduism of their superfluities, to callback a wayward Mankind to Love and Sacrifice,and thus revive the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth?

Chapter 2.
India's Search for Truth.

It need hardly be pointed out that to understand the spirit and the significance of modern movements in India one must constantly keep in mind the foundations that have been laid for this new day by the patient toil and untiring efforts of generations of men and women. More than any other country in the world, perhaps, India still rests upon her past, and without knowing that past it is impossible for any one to understand or appreciate the stand she is taking in world affairs today. Hence, while a detailed study of her religious history is both impossible and unnecessary in this paper, we must turn our attention for a time to the main stream of her religious development with a view to gleaning such information as we can regarding the general direction it has taken, the tributaries it has recieved, and the possibility of any resultant change in direction.

The earliest extant religious document, the Vedas of the Hindus, is a vast and heterogenous compilation representing many centuries of religious culture. Its oldest part, the Mantra or Songs, exists in three collections, the Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Yajur Veda, and consists of hymns and formulae largely connected with sacrifices to the gods. A fourth collection, the Atharva Veda, is a collection of magic spells which obtained recognition only much later. To these four verse collections were added the Brahmanas, expositions in prose of the meaning of the hymns and sacrifices. Appended to these are writings of a more mystic kind, of which the ritualistic and allegoric parts are called Aranyakas, Forest

Forest books,and the philosophic parts,the Upanishads.The Rig Veda consists of more than a thousand hymns arranged in ten books,of which the first was clearly compiled after books two and nine.Latest of all is the tenth which embodies,with the earlier hymns,some which reflect the age of the Brahmanas. The period of the RigVeda has been fixed by scholars somewhere between 1500 and 1000 B.C.

The religion of the Rig Veda is in marked contrast to the Hinduism of later times.The hymns are the expression of the simple pastoral worship of the Aryan invaders of India. On the whole they are sufficiently primitive to make it possible to trace the development of natural phenomena into personified deities,and,different as is their religion from that of later India,they have not entirely lost their influence in modern India."No one who has listened to the chanting of these ancient songs,can fail to mark the veneration with which they are regarded.The Rig Vedic age is held to have been the Golden age,and some of these prayers are still in daily use.....one of the most important of modern reform movements,the Arya Samaj,goes back to the Rig Veda for its inspiration,and cultured Hindus of every school quote lines from these hymns with affection and reverence"[1].

As an account of the numerous Rig Vedic gods is unnecessary for our purpose,it must suffice to indicate the general character of the religion.

1.Living Religions of the East.Sydney Cave.p.15.

The hymns reflect on the whole a simple worship of the objects of nature. For the most parts the gods are kindly. The caprice of one is feared, although men call him auspicious to avert his wrath, and the righteous anger of another is deprecated. Although the gods in general are not thought of as holy, the baser elements of religion are not prominent. Fear of devils there clearly is, and some of the hymns provide magic spells, but on the whole "the religion is a healthy happy system. Neither asceticism nor austerity, neither pessimism nor philosophy, disturbs the sunshine of that early day"[1]. Life is thought of as a blessing, and men pray that they "may survive a hundred lengthened autumns"[2]. When at last death comes, they hope to dwell in that "deathless undecaying world wherein the light of heaven is set and everlasting lustre shines".

The cardinal features of this early Aryan religion were direct access to the gods, direct benefits in answers to prayers and offerings, and consequent fervancy of prayer and meditation, and lavishness of praise and sacrifice which secured the desired blessings. This was spiritual progress from the superstition and magical rites of the Aborigines.

The Vedas also show one gratifying and upward movement in religion, which was the nigh water-mark of the earlier religious history of India, viz; the development of an incipient monotheism. The one early Vedic deity who had

1. An Outline of the Rel. Literature of India. Farquhar. p.13.
2. Rig Veda. Book. 10. Hymn 18, v.4.

a distinctly moral character was Varuna,who in name and in sphere,originally indicated the firmament.In his case the grandeur of the physical firmament became united with moral grandeur,and Vedic poets ascribed to Varuna activities similar to those which Hebrew poets ascribed to Yahveh.Varuna is a moral soveriegn who awakens in men a sense of sin.All the hymns to Varuna are prayers for forgiveness.He is especially connected with the moral order which is called Ṛta in Vedic literature.

Yet this highest conception of Varuna as a righteous deity can only be called an incipient monotheism,since he was always only one of the gods."The many gods were largely many names of one god,much as monotheists now apply many epithets to the only God whom they acknowledge"[1]. There is no ordered pantheon in which each god has his separate and permanent function,and to every god is ascribed the highest attributes one at a time.This "Kathenotheism"[2],to use Max Muller's phrase, is not monotheism,nor did it lead to such.It is perhaps simpler to describe the religion as a polytheism;but a polytheism unstable and in decay.For sacrifices and prayers had already become a business transaction.

The decay of polytheism led to the quest of a unitary principle,which finds expression in the speculative hymns of the last book.The quest for unity was not the quest

1.An Interpretation of India'sReligious History.Hume.p.39.
2.India:What can it teach us.p.147.

of one holy god,but of the Infinite,the substrate of all being. In the later hymns,thought turned more and more to the whence why,what and whither of all subjects,especially the mysteries of the universe and human life.While to ask such questions is natural and praiseworthy,the result has not always been satisfactory as the history of Indian thought shows."The outcome of an immense amount of acute thinking by a large body of quick-witted men ended in a consistent impersonal monism which has not helped men to love God and brother men, but to make a pessimistic view of life and to neglect their duties"[1].The conclusion of Vedic philosophical speculation was that in the universe there is only one substance which is impersonal and which is rightly termed It or That.This was the first experience in India of the easy,but awfull,fall which follows the pride of mere intellectualism in religion when divorced forn the heart.Yet this metaphysical conclusion of absolute unity in the universe is a necessary element in a religion for intelligent minds,as is being realised more and more in the present day.This conclusion,of the unity of all being,has been at the back of all Hindu thought for the last three thousand years.

Simultaneously with the beginnings of speculation we find a tendency for religion to degenerate,and be dominated by extreme ritualism.In the earliest hymns sacrifices were a prominent feature but they were not propitiatory

1.Interpretation of India's Rel.History.Hume.p.40.

offerings to appease an offended deity.They were feasts to which the gods were invited as guests.The wood of the sacrificial altar was ignited by the householder himself striking together two pieces of wood,and then this fire was personified and adored as divine.The next step was a downward one when the letter choked the spirit.In the Rajur and Sama Vedas,sacrifice became the principal thing in religion,and was supposed to appease the god and to influence him to do the worshipper's wish.When sacrifice was made elaborate and supreme,the priest became of great importance in religion because only he could conduct such an elaborate service.The desire to appease gods by sacrifices thus led to a sacerdotal and mechanical view of religion.This led to another downward step illustrated in in the Atharva Veda,the necessity and power of charm and spells for blessing and cursing.There were spells designed to avert the anger of the devils,or to utilise their services to bring destruction to enemies.Such interest as the book has lies in the glimpses it gives us of the ordinary life in ancient India,illustrating the inevitable result of too much intellectualism on the masses.

The second phase of India's religious thought has been called Brahmanism,though the Brahmans reject the name. We can trace the beginnings of the rudimentary doctrines of this age into the Vedic age,when speculators were vainly feeling after One Supreme Being.The hymn composers only gave expression to man's craving for some perception of the Infinite.

What the deepest thinkers,even at that early period, felt with ever-increasing intensity was that a Spirit (Atman) beyond the cognizance of sense,permeated and breathed through all material things.They thought of this same Spirit vivifying their own bodies with the breath of life - of this mysterious Presence enshrined in their own consciences.Then they identified this same Spirit with the Divine Afflatus thrilling through the imaginations of their own hymn composers, with the spiritual efficacy of the hymns themselves , with the mystic power inherent in divine knowledge and prayer.This mysterious ,all-pervading,spiritual Power and Presence,which was wholly unbound by limitations of Personality and Individuality,became at last a reality.This Breath of Life recieved a name.They called it Brahman (from the root brih,to expand) because it expanded through all space.It was a pure essence which not only diffused itself everywhere,but constituted everything.Men,gods,and the visible world were merely its manifestations.

Such was the fundamental doctrine of Brahmanism. Soon,however,it became a more complex system which may be regarded as possessing two sides or phases running into each other and nowhere separable by a sharply defined line. On one side,we find it developing along ritualistic lines and on the other,along the philosophic lines which led to the production of the Upanishads.

Out of the ritualistic polytheism of the Rig Veda there developed a pure ritualism which made sacrifice itself the whole thing, practically to the exclusion of the gods themselves, to whom the sacrifice after all was to be made. The Brahmanas are the reflection of this age in which religion was in decay, prayer and sacrifice were a mere theurgy, and the priests claimed for themselves greater importance than their gods. Unspeakably wearisome and puerile as these books are, they enable us to trace the origin of most that has entered into the complex of modern Hinduism. Already the caste system has taken deep root, and the Sudra, fourth or servant caste, is excluded from religion for ' the gods talk only to the higher castes'. The Brahmans, priests, have begun to claim for themselves a divine sanctitiy. They have gained for themselves a monopoly not only in religion, but in education and government. Sacrifice has become the all-important part of living, and is used as an instrument for the attainment of superhuman powers and even exaltation to heaven. This involved the elaboration of a complicated ritual and the organisation of a regular heirarchy.

A reaction from an overdone ritual was inevitable. People became wearied with sacrifices and sacrificers. The minds of thinking men found no rest in the blood of slaughtered victims. The pendulam had swung to one extreme. It had to swing equally to the other extreme. This reaction came in the form of metaphysical investigations.

The Upanishads are the special bible of this philosophic phase of Brahmanism."In the Vedic hymns man fears the gods,and imagines God;in the Brahmanas,man subdues the gods,and fears God;in the Upanishads,man ignores the gods,and becomes God"[1].Such in brief is the theosophic relations between the three periods represented by the first Vedic collections,the ritualistic Brahmanas,and the philosophic treatises called the Upanishads.

While all the Upanishads make the affirmation that man's Spirit is the World Spirit,they still lack a unifying thought.There is no one philosophic or religious system in them,although there are steps towards,or fragments of,many systems.That is,many systems could be constructed or developed out of selected passages in them;and in fact,this was done in later India.The intellectual average of the Upanishads is undoubtedly higher than that of the hymns.They are in their essential spirit,tentative,struggling,searching;not dogmatic, final or positive.They are never satisfied with any degree of attainment in the formulation of their thoughts.Instead, they are continually searching for new points of view."With a restless yearning after truth,which has perhaps never been surpassed and seldom equalled,they struggle towards peak after peak of mental achievement,only to abandon them unhesitatingly and unregretfully,in the hope of finding a higher peak beyond.Between the peaks they sometimes descend into what seems to us low swamps of the commonplace,and

1.Religions of India.Hopkins.p.216.

sometimes they relapse into states of mind which ought to have been long since forgotten,but who can live constantly on the heights?Absolute Truth is what they seek.If they do not find it that is not their fault.It should rather be put down to their credit that they do not delude themselves into thinking that they have found it permanently.Let him who has found it permanently cast the first stone at them:"[1]

The teachers of the Upanishads believed that man can attain to unending joy;not the rude happiness of heaven-seekers,but the unchanging bliss of immortal peace.For him that wished it,there was heaven and the gods.These were not denied;they were as real as the 'fool' that desired them. But for him that conquered passion,and knew the truth,there was existence without the pain of desire,life without end, freedom from re-birth.The spirit of the sage thus became one with the Eternal;man became God.

Such was the philosophic heights reached by the Upanishads.Even today thinking men of all nations and creeds when they have understood them psychologically and intelligently admit that in intellectual vigour the Upanishadic interpretation of religion stands second to none.

Two important assumptions about the phenomenal universe that underlie all Hindu thought,were clearly inunciated during this period of speculation.When endless retribution and reward did not seem just or probable, speculation turned to one of the most controlling ideas of

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1.Religions of the Past and Present.J.Montgomery.p.134.

Hinduism,viz;re-birth and re-death through many cycles. Naturally the condition of one's future existence is assumed to depend on one's character in the previous state.This led to the doctrine of Karma,which is one of the essentials of Hindu religion.The doctrine is that one's present state of existence is absolutely and exactly the fruit of one's actions or character in the previous state,and one's state in the next stage will be exactly the fruit of one's actions in the present.'As a man soweth so shall he reap' has been extended to beyond the present life as the Hindu believes in the continuity of life.Out of this arises the first assumption that the world exists solely that the soul may consume the fruit of its actions in a previous state of existence.If true,this would give a system of strict justice, bringing to every one reward and punishment in exact measure for the good or evil done by him.Also,then consistently the world-process must be,as Hindu thought asserts,eternal.

The second assumption is that only the Divine is real,that everything phenomenal is unreal.Granted that the world-process is solely retributive,and that the only reality is that which is behind the apparent,the conclusion logically follows,that one who knows the truth should seek escape from the sorrow and unreality of the world by absorption into the real.

The first Hindu assumption is a great conception for it fully recognises the immensity of the unmerited sorrows and inequalities of the world,yet holds to the inevitable connection of cause and effect in the moral,as well as in the physical world.The second assumption also is great,for it recognises that despite the perplexity and seeming unreality of the visible and experienced processes,there is a great reality underlying the universe.

The thoroughgoing qualities of these two ideas account for a great many strange accompaniments of Hinduism. Idol-worship and asceticism are easily allowed to the unenlightened by this philosophy of unreality.Knowledge is the only reality and only by knowledge and renunciation can one attain ultimate bliss.This conception has guarded India from rushing after material things,and it is this faith in the exclusive reality of the Spirit that is promising to save organised Christianity from the mechanised material civilisation of the age.

But,while on the one hand the thinkers formulated great conceptions and indulged in sublime speculations,on the other hand the masses were weltering in ignorance,superstition and licentiousness.They continued to worship all the religious phenomena of their inherited faith,physical objects,ghosts, and gods above,with a sectarian growth leading to different cults.Song,dance,and mimetic exhibitions,not too nice, accompanied religious festivals.Once again intellectualism proved too much for the mass of mankind.

As is natural in the circumstances,the corruption of death began to ferment into new forms of life.Reform movements began to appear every where in the country.Holy men discussed religion,scholars argued about it,and kings listened to it,all trying to find a way out of the chaos.But history shows that only two of the reform movements came to lasting prominence,Jainism and Buddhism.

The name Jainism comes from Jina,the conqueror,a title 'bestowed upon truimphant leaders of sects,who had conquered all controversial opponents and also conquered for themselves whatever bliss true religion may win'.In this case the Jina was a certain Mahavira,who instituted an order whose members called themselves Nigranthas,or Emancipated. They did not believe in the authority of the Vedas,nor in the existence of God,but adopted a dualistic philosophy. Certain illuminated human beings of the past became their objects of adoration.They taught the principle of Animsa or Harmlessness,which has become the cardinal feature of the new religion of India today,led by Gandhi.This sect,despite its heresy,has not antagonized the Branmans,as it clung to rites and ceremonies.It has existed for 2400 years being especially prominent in west and south India.It practically worships the great Jina and his predecessors,for,like the Buddhists,they believe in many Jinas.The Jain church in general allowed its lay members to build nunneries and monasteries, whose members constituted the bulk of the faithful.

Buddhism was the stronger of these two reform movements. The two most unsatisfactory features of the religion then prevalent in India were, first, an unethical ceremonial sacrificial system, and second, an unethical and depressing intellectualism. Dissatisfied with the existing system, Gautama, a prince in north India, devoted himself to contemplation and became the Buddha, the Enlightened. He had come to see that the essence of true religion is not in ceremonials, not in asceticism, not in speculation, but in possessing spiritual characteristics and in living a good life. He therefore advocated a 'middle Way', the mean between mechanical ceremonialism and arid intellectualism.

According to the Buddha there are four principles for the true way of religion. First, the belief that misery always accompanies existence; second, that the cause of misery is Desire; third, that misery can be escaped only by the cessation of Desire; and fourth, that Desire can be escaped by following the eight-fold path, the essence of which is a pure heart and a pure life.

While the Buddhist reform is one of the greatest illustrations of the might of ideas, perhaps the most impressive lesson of that whole movement is the power of a noble person, who illustrates in his life, the purer ideal which he teaches. In the history of the world, next to the instance of Christ, the Buddha is the most impressive example of how a religious leader, by example, can change the life of myriads for centuries.

The Buddha's teaching,enforced by his own example, that a pure heart and a life of service to fellow men are essentials of true religion,wrought immense good.It greatly lessened the extent of the power of ceremonialism,sacerdotalism, animal sacrifices,the pride of excessive intellectualism and of caste,and promoted simple living and helpfulness to men.

History sheds painfully little light on the thought and life in India in the first seven centuries of the Christian era,during which time Buddhism had been declining and was finally replaced by modern Hinduism.Yet many of the ideas and practices of Buddhism have been incorporated into Hinduism. Since the eighth century,Hinduism has been a mixture of the superstitious rites of the non-Aryan tribes,of the simple religion of the Vedic times,of the various doctrines of the Upanishads,and of the mild principles of Jainism and Buddhism, all directed by the brain-power of the Brahmans in the ~~ma~~ marvellous social organisation of Casts.In the development of this complex system called Hinduism,the laws of human evolution have been at work,and those laws are essentially the two fold ones of,first,the power of God at work drawing the human spirit towards Himself,and second,the lower tendencies of mankind pulling men's thoughts and lives downward. These lower tendencies appear in the superstitious and sensual elements which make up almost the whole of the non-Aryan religions;in the pride of excessive intellectualism, which has made many thinkers lose a sense of reality in life,while straining after metaphysical consistency;

in the spirit-killing literalism and pride of ceremonialism in the priests,and in the iron-clad and unprogressive Caste-system.The uplifting and renewing spirit of God appears in the earnest search for ultimate reality,in the conviction that by loving devotion to a personal God the believer is saved,and in the noble charity which characterised early Buddhism.

The history of Indian religions from the eighth to the ninteenth century may be summarised in a few words. Various religious leaders arose,each interpreting the Vedas and the Upanishads in his own way and establishing 'cults'. Buddhism was attacked vehemently by a Brahman from central India who placed emphasis on the existence and activity of an all-powerful God as the cause of the existence,continuance and dissolution of the universe.He was followed by his great disciple Sankara,who was, next to Buddha,the most influential religious leader India had.His chief intellectual work in Hinduism was the perfecting and popularising the doctrine of the unity of the Divine.He also taught the need for men generally of a personal God.His teaching was two-fold.For the intelligent educated man,Sankara taught that there is but one supreme and inscrutable First Cause,to be worshipped not by sacrifices,but by meditation.For the common man he allowed the worship of any god by any rites prescribed by the Vedas or any later teacher.In other words,he emphasised Knowledge for the intelligent,and Faith for the masses.

This gave rise to the Vedanta philosophy and the Shiva Cult. In accordance with the principle of excessive accommodation Shiva was to each worshipper that which the latter sought. This led to a deterioration in religion,again falling into countless offerings and sacrifices.When the Shiva cult came into unsatisfactoriness,there arose another,the Vaishnava Cult,which is called the way of salvation by loving devotion to a Personal God.The most important religious book of the Hindus,the Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song,is an attempt to analyse the complex religious situation and explain it to the lay man.The substance of its doctrine may be simply stated thus:There is a God who is a conscious,eternal,almighty Being.The souls of men are imperishable.All of God's actions are for the good of the universe.The relation of God to the world and man is not solely determined by the law of retribution,as assumed by the Karma school,but by love to those who know him and are sincerely devoted to him.He delivers from sin those who take refuge in him.So salvation comes by the grace of God.

The Gita teaches three ways of worshipping God. One is the Way of Knowledge,of an Absolute God,for the intelligent;another is the Way of loving devotion to a Personal God,and the third is the Way of Righteous living,of doing one's duty without thought of reward.The three fundamental elements of religion are herein recognised,the intellectual, the emotional,and the moral.

The coming of Islam into India marked the beginning of another series of reform movements.The Indian Pantheism had metaphysically prepared the way for the monotheism of the Mohammadans.But that Pantheism had been a real cause of the unhealthy growth of Polytheism,idolatry and superstition,which always develope in the masses when thinkers pursue Pantheism.There was the need of a stern iconoclastic religion like Islam which flamed with indignation against these abuses which outwardly appeared to be the whole of Hinduism.

The Mohammadans did great service to India though they smashed temples,mutilated idols,and converted people at the point of the sword.Their greatest service was other than what they intended or understood."Few lessons are fitted to be so suggestive to those who would cristianize India as understanding how Islam most helped India to purify her religion.The religious history of India shows that though considerable numbers of Hindus from the uneducated and lower classes became Mohammadans,the greatest service of Islam was not to make converts,but without intention,to inspire some devout and thoughtful Hindus to see the fundamental truths of monotheism and to initiate new reforming movements"[1]

The earliest of these reformers was Kabir, a north Indian,who attempted to compromise between Hinduism and Islam.

1.An Interpretation of India's Religious History.Hume.p.93.

But the most infuential reform movement began in the North West under Nanak,the first great Guru of the Sikns. Nanak was a contemporary of Luther and in some respects was like that great German.The founder of the Sikh religion wrote a book called the Granth,containing the principles of his faith;ie;some measure of the unity and Personality of God, the distinctness and responsibilty of man and therefore some degree of real sin.He was as severe against polytheism as the Mohammadans.One point in which Sikhism is saner and more helpful in teaching and influence than ordinary Hinduism is that it teaches the disciples to stay in the world to help it instead of fleeing from it.Nor did Nanak believe in the Caste-system.It was commanded later that Caste was not to be recognized in the Sikh community.

Others besides Nanak were influenced by Islam. Several spiritual minded men reached the highest development of a pure religion up to their times,as a result of the Islamic impact.Among these were Tulsidas,Chaitanya,and Tukaram, unquestionably saints under the influence of God's spirit.They made religion consist of faith in a personal God,in purity of heart awakened by loving devotion,and in simplicity and kindliness of life.

But while the religious influence of these saints was very great,and while it has never lost vitality,yet Hinduism as a whole was only moderately modified by these healthy movements.Superstition,polytheism,idolatry,formalism, and immorality characterised a large part of popular religion.

The religion of the masses remained corrupt and degenerate. Caste was iron clad and depressive.Flesh continued to triumph over spirit.Child-marriage,widow-burning and other inhuman customs were quite common.Political confusion added greatly to the misery of the country.Cities were scenes of rapine, violence and murder.The powers of darkness held sway.The whole country was soon in a state of chaos,petty powers cropping up suddenly and as suddenly fading off,more powerful ones engaged in deadly feud,and the people sunk in the quagmire of poverty,ignorance,famine and pestilence.

Thus with the eye of History we see India on her search for truth,reaching time and again high sublime philosophic heights,falling ever down into degeneracy and darkness through the ignorance of the masses and the wiles of a crafty priesthood.Into this dark middle of superstition and abomination came Islam,proclaiming the unity of the Godhead,and denouncing in vehement voices idolatry and polytheism.And now and then we hear a voice from among the crowd,like a voice in the the wilderness,feeble,yet loud enough to be heard by a few,crying for co-operation,pleading for spiritual revival,denouncing demon worship,and praying for Light and understanding.

But the darkness was the darkness before dawn.India was facing a great crisis.Hindu civilisation decadent,Mohammadan power broken down,a new power was rising;a power,alien in customs,manners,culture and religion bit a power better organised, with better ideals and more practical outlook.The British power arrived with Bullets and Bibles and India passed into a new phase.

Chapter 3.

The Call of the Christ.

In these days when the nations of the earth are awakening to the necessity of establishing a moral unity in a world which has suddenly become a physical unity;when international trust and goodwill are being stressed as never before as the only way for peace and prosperity,people are beginning to recognize the Foreign Enterprise of the Christian Church as one of the most significant forces operative in human history.The Christian Ideal has always been Universal Brotherhood;and in Christianity has ever been an impulsive power that has sent forth into the various corners of the world a noble succession of men and women,who are,in no small measure,responsible for what moral unity we have achieved today.

India too has had her share of missionary heroes. Francis Xavier,when he started to India in 1542 to found the Roman Catholic Church there,refused to see his widowed mother and much-loved sister,lest he should be tempted to draw back.Later we see this indefatigible worker living among the low-caste Paravas,'on rice and water,spending sometimes twenty-one hours a day in prayer and work'.Modern Protestant missionary history in India opens with the Danish Mission ,which did very remarkable work in the Tamil country throughout the eighteenth century.An early missionary,whose name still pervades the country like a perfume,was Christian Frederic Schwartz,who,for over fifty years,lived among the people,visiting palace and hut alike,teaching school and relieving misery.

But it was the toils of William Carey and his colleagues that roused first Britain and then America and the Continent to a sense of their duty to the non-christian peoples of the world. William Carey, an English Baptist, arrived in Calcutta in 1793, and after many wanderings, settled as an indigo-planter in north Bengal. Here he studied Bengali and Sanskrit and began the work of translating the Bible into Bengali. In 1800 he settled in Serampore under the Danish flag and in the same year began to teach Sanskrit and Bengali in Lord Wellesly's College in Calcutta. It was not long before wise men, both in Missions and in Government, saw that it was most necessary for the good of all concerned that the Missions and the Government should work together. From then on until the present day, the history of Christian Missions in India is one long record of heroic men and women sacrificing their all for the progress political, social, economic, of the various races and groups that constitute the composite mass of Indian population. But as we are primarily concerned with the response to their work from within, we now turn to an examination of the important movements resulting from the impact of Christianity with the religions of India.

Of all the religious movements of the nineteenth century, the Brahma Samaj proved the most influential. Brahma is an adjective from Brahman, the God of the Upanishads, and Samaj means society.

Throughout its history it has remained sternly theistic and opposed to idolatry,and has always had a policy of reform.Looked at from one side,it is one of a series of attempts to found a spiritual religion on a genuine Hindu foundation;while,from the other side,it is a new creation, finding the sources of its vitality in Christian faith and practice.

Ram Mohan Roy,the founder of the Samaj,was born in a cultured Brahman family of Bengal.When he was twelve years old the boy was sent to study Persian and Arabic literature including the Koran itself,at the great seat of Mohammadan learning,Patna.Endowed with great natural abilities,and a capacity to work hard,he soon mastered the two languages and acquired a working knowledge in Logic,Philosophy,Euclid and other subjects.He read much of the literature of these languages and came to know something of the Moslem faith.Nor did he neglect the study of Hinduism.His father being a worshipper of Vishnu,every morning the son must have been accustomed to read a chapter of the Bhagavata Purana,and, being naturally thoughtful and intelligent,he must have seen through its fabulous nature.At the age of sixteen he wrote a spirited tract against Idolatry,which of course roused the anger of the community.So great was this conflict that he had to leave his father's home and wander about for some years before he was taken back,reconciled.

After a few years of wandering Ram Mohan settled in Benares and studied Sanskrit and English. From his earliest years he evinced an eagerness to become an unbiased student of all the religions of the world. His sole aim seems to have been to seek out religious truth for himself honestly and impartially. For this he mastered the several languages of the world's sacred books. He studied the Hindu Vedas in Sanskrit the Buddhist books in Pali, the Koran in Arabic, Old testament in Hebrew and the New in Greek!

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ram Mohan entered the service of the British East India Company " and thereby he not only entered the school of life where he came to know the world more intimately, but came to have a proper acquaintance with Western civilisation also". Very soon his keen and appreciative mind helped him to understand the sterling worth of the English people whom he had been taught to look upon with distrust; and in course of time by mastering the English language, he was able to comprehend the value of Western civilisation in many of its aspects as few of his countrymen have done since.

Thus by the time he was forty, he had made himself almost at home in three civilisations and cultures, and thus had laid the foundation for his future work as few men have been in a position to do. India alone could produce men like Ram Mohan Roy, in whom all the cultures met and mingled.

On retiring from from service in 1814, Ram Mohan, matured and mellowed with experience now, set himself to his chief work, 'to bring back his countrymen to what he believed to be the true monotheistic doctrine underlying the Vedic hymns and brought out more clearly in the Upanishad portion of the Veda'. For this he translated the Vedas and Upanishads into Bengali and English, and tried to prove that idolatry and the inhuman practice of Sutee were against their religion. In 1815 he established a society called the Friendly Association, which met weekly for the recitation of passages from the Hindu scriptures and for the singing of hymns. In 1820, as a result of his study of the Bible, he published a little book, in Bengali and English, entitled "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness"," a notable book which was harshly criticised by the missionaries, who complained unreasonably that it did not express the fulness of the Christian faith"[1]. That the spirit of Christ had moved Ram Mohan is evident from the book itself. He himself expressed the result of his study of the Gospels thus. "The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge"[2]. In the preface to his book Ram Mohan says, "The simple code of religion and morality is admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas

1. Living Religions of the East. Cave. p.56.
2. Modern Religious Movements in India. Farquhar. p.32.

to high and liberal notions of one God.....and is also well-fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God,to themselves,and to society,that I cannot but hope the best effects of its promulgation in its present form".

His position was that Christ was a theist like himself,that His disciples misunderstood Him,and that the whole Christology is a huge mistake.Whatever we may think of this attitude,we can now see what a striking and prophetic advance in the growth of the Hindu religion the book indicates. Here was a man well-versed in Hindu and Mohammadan religions acknowledging the superiority of the doctrines of Jesus to any other he had known.

The publication of this book started a long and heated controversy between Ram Mohan Roy and the Christian Missionaries.In the course of the controversy he wrote three 'Appeals to the Christian Public' wnich are not without useful lessons to the Christian Missions even today.While carrying on the controversy,he translated the Gospels into Bengali,as he was not satisfied with the one made by Carey. He did this 'in close collaboration with messers Adam and Yates who belonged to the same mission as Carey'.While translating the Fourth Gospel,a serious difference arose between Adam and Yates,and after Yates withdrew,Ram Mohan had a conversation with Adam,who as a result became a Unitarian. Ram Mohan also acknowledged Unitarian Faith and together they set to work for the spread of their faith.

In 1821,they formed a regular committee of Europeans and Indians,called the Calcutta Unitarian Committee,their object being 'to remove ignorance and superstition and to furnish information respecting the evidences,the duties,and the doctrines of the religion of Jesus'.

All this time Ram Mohan was carrying on a minor controversy with the Missionaries, under the pseudo-name of Univ Prasad Sarma.During the course of the two or three years that this lasted,he brought out four numbers of what he called 'The Brahminical Magazine,or the Missionary and the Brahman,being a vindication of the Hindu religion against the attack of Christian Missionaries'.Herein with keen insight and deep understanding he brought out the defects of Christian missionary methods in Inida,defects which the blind enthusiasts are only beginning to see now.He said in the preface; "It is true that the Apostles of Jesus Christ used to preach the superiority of the Christian religion to the natives of different countries.But we must recollect that they were not the rulers of those countries where they preached.Were the Missionaries likewise to preach the Gospel and distribute books in countries not conquered by the English,such as Turkey,Persia,etc;which are much nearer England,they would be esteemed a body of men truly zealous in propogating religion,and in the following of the Founders of Christianity. In Bengal,where the English are the sole rulers,and where the mere name of Englishman is sufficient to frighten people,an

encroachment upon the rights of her poor timid and humble inhabitants and upon their religion cannot be viewed in the eyes of God or the public as a justifiable act".Later on he said;" if by force of arguments they can prove the truth of their own religion and the falsity of that of the Hindus, many would of course embrace their doctrines,and in case they fail to prove this,they should not undergo such useless struggle,nor tease the Hindus any longer by their attempts at conversion".

It must have been this proselytising work of the Christian Missionaries that gave a different turn to his religious work and caused the starting of the Brahma Samaj. Ram Mohan had declared himself a Unitarian and was doing his best to spread it in India at a great cost to himself;but he was thwarted in this work by the orthodox Hindus on one side, and the orthodox Christian Missionaries on the other.These latter attacked the Hindu religion in every way under cover of the Government,and carried on vigorous proselytising work. Ram Mohan knew that this would lead a number of poorer and middle class Hindus to adopt Christianity,not from any conviction but from need and necessity,In fact this kind of 'conversions' from the economic and social point of view were already taking place.Knowing that only permanent harm would result,both to the Hindu community and to the Christian religion,if this went on,he attempted an intelligent compromise Thus,it was to this fear that the Brama Samaj owed its origin.

It was in 1828 that the Samaj was first formed, though it did not become very active until two years later. Membership was open to every one irrespective of caste, colour or creed. The object was only spiritual worship of One God, the promotion of piety, morality and charity, and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religions, classes and creeds. No image, print, or picture, portrait or likeness, was admitted within their building; no sacrifice was offered there; and nothing recognized as an object of worship by other men was spoken of with contempt.

Realising the need of developing the social aspect of religion, Ram Mohan took active part in several other measures of public utility in various fields. He started a Bengali paper, opened some schools, aided considerably the Viceroy in stopping the inhuman custom of widow-burning, and by pen and tongue fought untiringly the evils of idolatry, polygamy, and ignorance. He also saw with prophetic eye that India 'could be either useful and profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire, or troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy', and claimed in advance for his country the political rights which progress in civilisation inevitably involves.

In 1833, this great man who sowed the seeds of a 'Hindu Christianity' sailed for England, and there died, while in Bristol. At his death the Samaj began to languish, and was only maintained by the generosity of his friend Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, the grand-father of the present poet.

The influence of the Samaj revived in 1842 when Debendranath Tagore, son of the Prince, joined it. Ram Mohan was had been unduly Deistic, but Debendranath, although he was less conscious of obligation to Christ, was a more deeply religious man, and introduced into the services of the Samaj a new element of prayer and devotion.

In 1857, a young Calcutta student, from a well-known Vishnuite family and with a good modern education, Keshub Chunder Sen by name, joined the Samaj, and by 1859 was a ~~promin~~ prominent member. In 1861, he, with some other younger members, gave up their livlihood and became its missionaries. Keshub was made a minister. He toured through India and vigorously denounced idolatry and bade men 'kill the monster of caste' and reform the 'marriage customs which involve evils of great magnitude'. Debendranath grew apprehensive of his influence, and asked the minister to wear the sacred thread of the Hindus when officiating. Refusing, Keshub and his party withdrew form the Samaj, which now became more conservative under Debendranath. This leader lived to an old age, and is revered as a great seer. He was unwilling to owe anything to Christ, though he abandoned the central interest in Hinduism.

In 1866, Keshub, having studied Christian literature delivered at Calcutta his memorable address on 'Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia'. In it he protested boldly against "that denationalisation which is so general among native converts to Christianity", who forget that "Christ, their master, was an Asiatic", and against the harshness with which Europeans

condemn Indians.He spoke with passionate admiration of the "blessed Jesus,immortal child of God.Was He not an Asiatic? When I reflect on this,my love for Jesus becomes a hundred fold intensified.I feel Him nearer my heart and deeper in my national sympathies"[1].And he bade his countrymen find in the cross of Christ the inspiration for lives of self-denial that they might dedicate themselves to God's service andtheir country's welfare.

Many of the followers of Keshub turned enthusiastically to the study of the Bible;and the touch of Christ produced a new seriousness among them,which showed itself in an eager desire to lead a pure and holy life,and a passion for saving souls.In 1866 Keshub founded a new Brahma Samaj, and invited all Brahmans to join it.A selection of theistic texts from the scriptures of the chief religions of the world was published,and methods of Vaishnavite devotion were introduced.Keshub then left for England,wher he was enthusiastically recieved.He delivered lectures in all parts of that country,met many noteworthy people,and returned to India 'with a new sense of the priceless value of the Christian home,and with his head full of fresh schemes for social reform'.

In 1881 Keshub announced that his was the Church of the New Dispensation.Its emblem was a symbol made up of a trident,cross and crescent,and the ritual imitated not only Hindu ceremonies,but Christian sacraments also.

1.Living Religions of the East.Cave.p.58.

Keshub claimed that his New Dispensation was Christ's Second Advent,and declared that for himself,he with Paul could say,"For me to live is Christ".It seems clear that his deepest religious experience was due to Christ,but he was no systematiser,and "although his deepest theological beliefs were fully Christian,he never surrendered himself to Christ as Lord".[1].He was a type of very many noble-minded Hindus,who today are not nominally Christians,and yet derive their ideals from Christ.

His death left the New Dispensation divided.His natural successor would have been his friend and biographer P.C.Mozumdar,the author of that noble work, "The Oriental Christ";but he was deemed too Christian in his sympathies, and the Church lost influence through its dissensions.

The Adi Brahma Samaj,the original one founded by Ram Mohan,still persists.More important however,is the Sadharan Brahma Samaj,another branch of it which has a permeating infulence far outside the limits of its membership.

Thus in Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen we trace the response of intelligent Hinduism to the irresistible challenge of Christ.These movements were earnest attempts of these patriotic Hindus to incorporate into their indigenous religions the spirit of the Great Galilean.

While this movement was developing in north east India,a very similar one in western India was organized as the Prarthana Samaj,Prayer Society.This was in 1867,three

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1.Modern Religious Movements.Farquar.p.67.

years after Keshub's visit to Bombay,having for its aim theistic worship and social reform."It claims that the best thought of Aryan,Semite,and Christian alike has been directed to the evolution of the spiritual aspirations of man;that the duty of every spiritual movement is not to destroy,but to fulfil the highest teaching of preceding teachers;that India is above all countries fitted to be the sphere for a new and finest spiritual religion,because it is her genius to absorb the best from all influences which come to her....that mercy and service to men,not ceremonies and sacrifices,will be the fruits of religion"[1].

The Prarthana Samaj has never had such groups of missionaries as have toiled for the Brahma Samaj.For this reason the movement has not spread widely,nor has it produced much literature.Yet it counted among its members some of the most noteworthy men of India,such as Justice Ranade and Sir.R.G.Bhandarkar.

The beliefs of this Samaj are practically the same as those of the Brama Samaj.They maintain the Fatherhood of God andthe Brotherhood of man[2]. If theistic worship is the first interest of the Samaj,social refor has always held the next place.Four reforms are sought,the abandonement of caste,the introduction of widow-marriage,the encouragement of famale education,and the abolition of child-marriage. Religious activities include Sunday services,Sunday-schools, the Young Theist's Union(a sort of Endeavour Society),the

1.Interpretation of Indiads Religious History.Humep.
2.Essays.Ranade.p.250.

Postal Mission which sends religious literature by Post,andthe Paper Subodh Patrika. There are eight night-schools for working people financed and conducted by the Samaj;a Free Reading Room and Library in the Samaj building;and there is a Ladies' Association for spreading instruction and culture among women and girls.The Student's Brotherhood,a theistic replica of the Y,M.C.A.,is loosely associated with it.There is also an Orphanage and a Foundling Asylum supported by the Samaj.The greatest service which this Samaj has done to India has been the organization of the Social Reform Movement. Nearly every vigorous effort made in favour of social reform during the last thirty years,has been started,and largely carried on,by its members.The same is true of the Depressed Classes' Mission.

It would be legitimate to speak of other movements in Hinduism,such as the Arya-Samaj,Theosophical Society,and the Servants of India Society,which are less influenced by contact with Christian thought ;but time and space do not permit such references.

It was not only the Hindus that were moved to reform their religion by the Christian impact.The Parsis, who were originally Persians,followers of the Zoroastrian religion,who constitute an important community in India,have also shared in the great religious revival in India.It is agreed that at the beginning of the nineteenth century,this group also shared in the general stagnation of religion.

characteristic of India at the time.Many of them by then were very prosperous and influential,but sacred learning had decayed and most of the priesthood were too ignorant to be spiritual teachers.Western education was begun in Bombay in 1820 and in 1835 Dr.Wilson started his Christian College education there. In 1843 when he published his book on the Parsee religion, it made a great impression on the people, and helped to stimulate movements for vigorous reform.The Parsees realising their own ignorance,began to establish schools for boys and girls.A Religious Reform Association was formed by a group of infuential and wealthy Parsees,and a number of young men from the Christian college took the lead.A young priest named Dhala,came to Columbia and studied under professor Jackson, the famous Zoroastrian scholar.He returned to India in 1909, and convened a Conference in 1910,'to inaugurate a liberal movement for the purpose of restoring Zoroastrianism to its pristine sublimity,and simplicity;in other words,to weed out all practices,beliefs,creeds,rituals,ceremonies,and dogmas that have clustered round the true original religion, and to instruct and guide the community accordingly'[1].

Four such Conferences have been held .The Parsee religion was revived and purified.Social reform was carried on very effectively.Today the Parsees are the most advanced community in India,in education,wealth and social status.

1.Indian Social Reformer.Vol.22.P.113.

Nor was the Mohammadan community,which constitute a large minority of 69,000,000,left untouched by the advance of Christianity.

The fall of the Mogul Empire,which had weilded much power and controlled enormous wealth,had produced the direst effects on the Mohammdans.The whole community sank with the empire.Necessarily there was very bitter feeling against the European who had so unceremoniously helped himself to the empire of their fathers.The old education and culture rapidly declined;and for many decades the Mohammadans failed to take advantage of the new education planted by the conqueror.

But a change came at last.A certain Syed Ahmed Khan,of an ancient family,after recieving a Mohammadan education,had found a position under the British administration. He soon realised the worth in Western culture and also the danger in which his community stood in relation to the rapidly advancing Hindus.He saw clearly that Mohammadans of India must absorb the science and education of the West, and must also introduce large social reform amongst themselves, or else fall into complete helplessness and ruin.Soon he founded an association for the study of Western culture. He established English schools,and struggled in every possible way to convince his community of the wisdom of learning English and absorbing the foreign culture.Seeing clearly that Englishmen also needed to learn to sympathize with Indian

aspirations,he formed a British-Indian Association in 1866. In 1869 he visited England,and on his return next year,began to publish a monthly,Reform of Morals.It dealt with religious social,and educational subjects courageously.He combated prejudice against Western science,advocated greater social freedom,and sought to rouse the community to self-confidence and vigorous effort.The climax of his educational efforts was the creation of the Anglo-Mohammadan College (now a University) at Aligarh,"the first college founded by an Indian that follows the Missionary idea,that education must rest on religion"[1].His aim was to reproduce in India what he had seen in Oxford and Cambridge.The students reside in the college;so also the teachers.Athletics are prominent and religion is an integral part of the work.Several members of the staff and the president are Europeans.

Early in life,Syed Ahmed Khan abandoned the charge often made by orthodox Mohammadans,that Christians have seriously corrupted the text of the Old and New Testaments.He urged his fellow-believers that they should not consider Christians as Kafirs and enemies,and declared that the Bible and the Koran,when rightly understood,did not contradict each other.As Ram Mohan Roy wrote the 'Precepts of Jesus',this Mohammadan reformer wrote a Commentary on Genisis,which has been of real value in opening Mohammadan minds.

1.Modern Religious Movements in India,Farquhar.p.94.

The reform movement started by Syed Ahmed Khan has been continued by a succession of able scholars,notably the Right Hon.Syed Amir Ali.They argue that the religious, social,moral and political reforms,which ,through Christian teaching,modern thought and the pressure of the times,are being inevitably forced on Mohammadan society,are in full consonance with Islam.The question of polygamy and female seclusion,the two chief evils in the community,are being actively attacked by educated men and women.Mohammadan leaders today appear in public with their wives and daughters in European dress!

Of a long series of religious reform movements,we have,of necessity,dealt with only a few;and that,in brief and hasty sketches.But it is quite clear that,while the shaping forces at work in these have been many,Christianity has ruled the development throughout.The latter has been "a great searchlight flung across the expanse of the religions; and in its blaze all the coarse,unclean and superstitious elements of the old faiths stood out quite clearly in painful vividness.India shuddered;and the earlier movements were the response to the revelation"[1].

But the same search light enabled them to appreciate better the nobler and more spiritual elements of their religions.As a result,while trying to crush out the worst, they also sought to build up fresh organisations which should be able to bear the searching glare of the Light .

1.Modern Religious Movements in India.Farquhar.p.433.

In the reconstruction of the Indian religions necessitated by the advent of Christianity,we find the tendency to exclude all outward forms of religion.Though most of the material used was old we find that Christian principles have guided the development.Christianity made men feel that the only possible religion is monotheism.This has naturally tended to exclude polytheism,idolatry,mythology and man-worship.The Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man was accepted with practical unanimity in all the movements.The righteousness of God as taught by Jesus has also exercised a profound influence on the reformers.The methods of the missionaries were also greatly imitated in many of the movements.Yet not one of the reform movements accepted the Christian Church with its creeds,dogmas and strange forms of worship.With an uncanny instinct,as it were,they seem to have been able to see that Western Christianity,with its mechanized Ecclesiasticism, obstinate Imperialism,and practical Paganism,is a monstrous menace to the simple,spiritual,pacific nature of the Indians. Hence they took the spirit of the Prince of Peace and tried to incorporate it into their own simple forms of worship.

Thus India responded to the Call of Christ, saw Him in foreign cloths,and tried to take Him and to discard the alien wrappings.

Now they are trying to clothe Him in familiar vestments,and make Him their own.

Chapter 4.

The Renaissance of Jesus.

If in the nineteenth century India woke up to the call of Christ,in the twentieth century her response has been greater still.During the last three decades Jesus has become a real living figure to millions of Indians,Hindus and Moslems,who,fifty years ago,were hostile to Christian Missionaries,now throng to hear lectures on the Great Galilean.That He was an Oriental,and that His religion is not an alien religion,is proudly proclaimed by those who a few years ago hated the very name of Christ.Today Indians judge themselves and others by the Christian standard,and speak quite commonly of their 'Christian duty'.Several new Societies,Movements,and Ashrams are being formed to pay homage to the Oriental Christ and make Him India's ideal.

The spirit of Jesus has been reaching the heart of India through various channels.Christian Missionary effort, undoubtedly,has been one of the main.With the changed attitude of the missionaries,with the living Christian examples of men like C.F.Andrews,and with the dissociation of Jesus from Western Christianity,India has found a new Saviour,a new manifestation of God in Him,and with her characteristic genius,she has adopted Him for her own.Interest in Him has been steadily growing,and "as the physical atmosphere becomes heavy with moisture,so heavy that it is precipitated into rain,so the spiritual atmosphere of India is...on the verge of and is actually being precipitated into Christian forms and Christian expression"[1].

1.Christ of the Indian Road.Jones.p.65.

One such expression is the exquisite mystical theism of Rabindranath Tagore,which a missionary of great insight has described as "giving us a glimpse of what Christianity of India will be - a Christianity better than that which we introduced into India"[1].Almost all the poems of the exquisite Gitanjali may be used in Christian worship;the Divine Lover to whom they are offered is a Christ-like God whose footstool is among the lives of the poorest and the lowliest and lost, who is 'where the tiller is tilling the hard ground,and where the path maker is breaking stones.He is with them in sun and shower,and His garment is covered with dust.He is to be met in Nature,and in the busy throng of men'.

Though many a patriotic Indian has repudiated the idea that their revered poet has been influenced by Christian ideals,it is quite clear to the observant,that,as Keshub Chunder Sen said fifty years ago,"the Spirit of Christianity has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian society, and we breathe,think,and move in a Christian atmosphere". Rabindranath,a child of his times,and one of the inner circle of the Brahma Samaj in his early upbringing,could not fail to drink deeply of that spirit.We may easily trace the mind of Jesus at work in the greatly enlarged and purified idea of God in his poems.Nor do his followers deny that the spirit of service has come into their Ashram from the Servant of men."We know Christ here" said the greatest of them.

1.The Gospel for Asia.Saunders.p.192.

Hearts in India have turned with the same wistfulness and reverence to another young and ardent prophet of the new evangel. Sadhu Sundar Singh has been calling India to the love and simplicity of the Gospel in a voice which thrills her because it is the voice of her own prophets. He lives and preaches the Gospel of Christ in true Indian terms and so appeals to the heart of India. "The Indian", he says, "must have the water of Life, but not in a cup of European make and design"[1]. So he comes to her clad in the yellow robe of the saints; he speaks in homely parables like Sakyamuni; he calls her to find Reality, like the Upanishadic sages, and to escape the maya of the false world. But he makes a sweeping renunciation of all Indian conceptions and traditions which he could not harmonise with the spirit of the Gospels. "His message is not a comprise: it is no synthesis of Indian and Christian religious thought, which has been the dream of so many Indian and Western minds. The Sadhu does not believe that the Upanishads and the New Testament are of equal value, which is the point of view held by the followers of the Brahma Samaj, and along another line, by a German philosopher and disciple of Schopenhauer, Paul Deussen. His message is the pure Gospel of God's revealed love in Christ. It is only the language in which he clothes the old Gospel which is new and original. This however, is as genuine and pure as it is in the hands of the greatest Christian thinkers. One might almost say that it

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1. Gospel for Asia. Saunders. p.195.

is even more genuine and pure than that of many classical Christian mystics.For this reason Sundar Singh has the right to rank as an apostle of Christ,as an apostle of India"[1].

But undoubtedly the greatest apostle of Christ in India today is Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi,hailed the Mahatma, Great Soul,whose "serenity approaches that of Buddha,faith is is as unalterable as that of St.Paul,courage equals that of Garibaldi,and love reminds one of St.Francis"[2].Educated Hindus regard him as emodying the spirit of Jesus,while to the dumb millions he is God Incarnate.[3]He is beloved by more millions of human beings and has a greater multitude of disciples and devotees than any other person in many generations.Little children flock about him as naturally as they climb upon a father's knee."He appeals to the heart of the Indian People as no other man has done probably since the days of Buddha.While patriotic Hindus acclaim him as their idol and ideal,intelligent men on either side of the globe admit that more than any other man of this age he reminds one of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

He is the humblest of humble - a living 'suffering servant' of India and humanity.Long ago he dispossessed himself of all private property.For years he has been penniless. No symbols of pomp and power set him on a pedestal apart from his fellows. He has found a cause great enough to absorb

1.The Gospel of Sundar Sungh.Heiler.p.245.
2.Is Mahatma Gandhi the Greatest Man of the Age?Page.p.4.
3.Christ of the Indian Road.Jones p.59.

his personality,and he gladly and courageously sacrificed his lucrative profession and all material comforts he used to have. Today he leads the simplest life possible ,living on fruits, nuts and milk,wearing only homespun,and usually going stripped to the waist.His feet are bare except for a pair of sandals when outdoors.He gave all he had to the poor and the needy, and sacrificed his life to liberate them from misery.

Gandhi does not call himself a Christian.In fact he calls himself a Hindu.But a wide gulf separates him from the beliefs and practices of the vast majority of his co-religionists.Though he refuses to label himself a christian time and again it has been pointed out by Christian missionaries that 'few men in history have borne so striking a resemblance to the Divine Galilean'.His best friend,C.F.Andrews,in describing an experience in South Africa,writes,"All that day I watched the behaviour of the crowd and their attitude toward Mahatma Gandhi,their leader.It was there for the first time that I could understand the secret of his amazing influence with his fellow country men,and the reason for their devotion to him.I can only describe this briefly by saying that my thoughts went back to the Gospel story for analogy. He was there,in the heart of the multitude that pressed upon him.They had come to him without any thing to eat,and he was busy providing for their needs.An infinite tenderness and compassion shone from his eyes,while mothers brought their little children to him,so that he might lay his hands

upon them and bless them.The crowd would not leave him even for a moment and his patience was inexhaustible.He had not time himself to rest or take his own meal while he supplied others with food,for they went on pressing upon him and he would not turn them away.As I have often in memory looked back upon that scene and afterwards recalled many other pictures also of a similar character,I have been able from time to time to find the parallels I needed in history. Sometimes the scenes I have witnessed have reminded me of the stories about the Buddha.But most often my thoughts have turned to the legends concerning St.Francis of Assisi. Mahatma Gandhi is,most nearly of any one I know,the St.Francis of this modern age,the Little Brother of the Poor"[1].

Gandhi is a Hindu but is extremely tolerant of all other faiths.He believes in the Oneness of God but thinks that idol worship has values for some people,his attitude towards them being similar to that of many christians toward images,ikons and other symbols.He looks upon the Hindu scriptures as being inspired but adds,"I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zand Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas".On anotner occasion he said:"I have endeavoured to study tne Bible,and consider it to be a part of my scriptures.The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal terms with the Bhagavad Gita for the domination of my heart.I yield to no Christian in

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1.Is Mahatma Gandhi the Greatest Man of the Age?Page.p.27.

the strength of devotion with which I sing 'Lead Kindly Light' and several other inspired hymns of a similar nature. I have come under the influence of noted Christian Missionaries belonging to different denominations,and I enjoy to this day the privilege of friendship with some of them.Thus I have offered the above suggestion not as a biased Hindu,but as a humble and impartial student of religion with great leanings towards Christianity".

In a famous address at Colombo,entitled the 'Place of Jesus',Gandhi spoke thus."For many years I have regarded Jesus of Nazareth as one among the mighty teachers that the world has had,and I say this in all humility.I claim humility for this expression because this is exactly what I feel.Of course,Christians claim a higher place for Jesus of Nazareth than I,as a non-Christian and a Hindu,am able to feel... I cam say that Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who have made a considerable influence on my life.I say to the seventyfive per cent of Hindus recieving instruction in this college that your lives also will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teaching of Jesus... The message of Jesus is contained in the Sermon on the Mount,unadulterated and taken as a whole.....If then,I had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and my interpretation of it,I should not hesitate to say'Oh,yes,I am a Christian'. But I know that at the present moment if I said any such

thing I would lay myself open to the gravest misinterpretation. ....Because of its western external appearence we in India have come to distrust the Christian Missionary endeavour that has reached us from the West...Do not confuse Jesus's teaching with what passes as modern civilisation. .By all means drink deep of the fountains that are given to you in the Sermon on the Mount;but then you will have to take up sack cloth and ashes also with regard to failure to perform that which is taught in Christ's sermon"[1].

Many years ago Gandhi said that it was the New Testament which really awakened him to the rightness and value of passive resistance.When he read in the Sermon on the Mount such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil;but whosoever smiteth on thy right cheek,turn to him thy left also' and 'Love your enemies;pray for them that persecute you,that you may be sons of your Father which is in Heaven', he was simply overjoyed,and found his opinion confirmed where he least expected it.Jesus Christ ,Daniel,and Socrates represented to him the purest form of passive resistance,or soul-force.On one occasion Gandhi wrote "Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering,the greater is the progress.Hence did the sacrifice of Jesus suffice to free a sorrowing world"[2].

1.Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas.Andrews.p.92.
2.Is Mahatma Gandhi the Greatest Man of the Age?Page.p.20.

The Great Soul of India saw clearly the misery his country is plunged in.People in the West can scarcely imagine the depths of misery in which hundreds of millions of Indians live.The average per capita income is estimated at $18 per year by most authorities,or less than five cents a day.Vast multitudes exist on a scale below the'jail standard'.The Madras Jail Department calculated that the government could not feed a prisoner sufficiently to maintain health and strength for less than seven seven cents a day.Yet the average per capita income for the entire nation is less than five cents ! Destitution is accentuated by extravagant social customs. Marriages and funerals are economic calamities in most homes. Debt is a national plague.Money lenders suck the blood of their fellows like leeches.Tens of millions of Indians are born in debt,and live all their days in debt,die in debt,and bequeath a debt to their children.In Native States the extravagances of the Princes and ruling aristocracies place a crushing burden upon the poor.In British India alone some three hundred thousand persons,under Britain's patronage, live on unearned income,often in extreme luxury.

And the poorest country in the world has to support the most highly paid Civil Service system.The Viceroy of India is paid ,90,000 a year'over fivethousand times India's average income,'while the British Prime Minister gets only 'ninety times Britain's average income'1.Every year Britain

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1.Refer Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to Viceroy.March 2nd.1930.

takes away a large amount of money for pensions for retired British soldiers and civil servants and generous furlough allowances for British officials.Recently, to build a new palace and other buildings for the Viceroy in New Delhi,the present capitol,$55,000,000 were spent while millions of Indians were starving!!

The dumb millions of India steeped in abysmal poverty, split by differences of language,race,and religion,into innumerable divisions,struggling in ignorance,stricken by low vitality,groaning under the crushing weight of social custom and the paralyzing effects of religious beliefs and institution have raised their inarticulate cry heavenwards for generations now.Unheeded?No.Heaven has always answered the cry of the oppressed.Long ago when the children of Israel cried in bondage a Moses appeared to deliver them.To champion the cause of the oppressed Negroes a Lincoln was born.Their cries were not unanswered.Nor were the wailings of India's hungry millions unheard of in heaven.Their answer too has come - in a cup of Suffering which thousands of their children yet unborn shall drink....

Mahatma Gandhi,the articulate voice of India,has taken upon himself the burdens of his people.Through years of bitter experience and hard study he came to the conclusion that the greatest obstacle to progress in India is the greed and graft of the western nations.That British rule has substantially improved conditions of life for thousands of

Indians is beyond question.Monuments to its credit are to be found on every hand and its story has been told in countless volumes.What had not been told until recently is the fact that Britain,consciously or unconsciously,has done also a great deal of harm to India.Continued political and economic exploitation have produced a slave mentality and general poverty indescribable.No student of human nature,acquainted with the notorious predatory instincts of the Nordic race, need to be told that Great Britain ,in holding India,is dominated by motives of self-interest.Even Britishers admit the fact.Sir William Joynson-Hicks,a prominent member of the recent Coservative Cabinet, asserted "We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians.I know it is said at missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians.That is cant.We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain.We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it.(Shame).Call shame if you like. I am stating facts.I am interested in missionary work in India, and have done much work of that kind,but I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians.We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general,and for Lancashire Cotton goods in particular"[1].

Frequent resort to extreme measures of repression has permanently embittered the relations between Britishers and Indians.On April 13,1919,at Amritsar,when an enormous crowd

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1.Analysis of the Political Situation in India.Page.p.41

estimated at ten thousand,including women and children, was holding a public meeting against the injunctions of the local government,a British general with a small body of troops and machine guns,opened fire without warning,on the unarmed and defenceless mob."The panic stricken multitude broke at once but for ten consecutive minutes he kept up a merciless fusillade - in all 1650 rounds - on that seething mass of humanity,caught like rats in a trap,vainly rushing for the few narrow exits or lying flat on the ground to escape the rain of bullets,which he personally directed to the points where the crowd was thickest.The 'targets',to use his own words,were good,and when at the end of those ten minutes, having almost exhausted his ammunition,he marched his men off by the way they came,he had killed,according to the official figures only wrung out of Government months later,379,and he left about 1200 pounded on the ground,for whom,again to use his own word,he did not consider it his 'job' to take the slightest thought!"[1] All India arose in agony at this monstrous atrocity perpetrated by a Christian nation!

And to add insult to injury,though the House of Commons condemned the conduct of General Dyer,the House of Lords defended him;and a popular paper raised a purse of $130,000 for him and presented him with a jewelled sword!

Mahatma Gandhi saw that India must be freed of this 'satanic Government'.

1.Is Mahatma Gandhi the greatest Man of the Age?Page.p.10

He saw clearly that there were two ways by which India might gain her freedom.She might take the way all other nations in history have taken - the way of the sword and the bomb -the way that many of his untamed compatriots have been constantly urging him to endorse,the underhand way of secrecy, plotting and intrigue and murder.But Gandhi rejected both the sword and the bomb,not because it was expedient,but because he believed with all his soul in something else,in another type of power - in another religion which is sorely needed by this war-weary world.He believed in Soul-force,in the power of Suffering,in another type of victory - a victory over oneself,an inner victory,the precursor of the outward national victory.All his rich religious heritage had taught him that Love was a stronger force than brute force,that suffering was the best method to achieve great ends.

So for the first time in human history a nation,for the attainment of its national rights,repudiated physical force and substituted moral force,and has made inward national regeneration an essential part of its program.Fifty thousand of his followers,besides all the leaders including himself,were beaten,bruised and thrown into the Jails of His Most Christian Majesty, the King of England and Emperor of India, by the Grace of God, for the unpardonable crime of opposing evil with love!Strange irony of history!For years the Christians preached to the 'heathens' about 'turning the other cheek',and when they did they struck them again!

Whether the movement gains its complete political victory or not,it has already gained the moral victory it deserved.In the fires of that suffering that Gandhi has kindled and inflicted on himself and his countrymen,there has come ,undoubtedly,an inward freedom,a purification from within of the social and political life of India.That love is the strongest force we know has been amply demonstrated by this humble Spinner of Sabarmati.Jesus,the Suffering Servant of humanity has come to life again in this Suffering Saint of India.Millions of Hindus and Mohammadans,who could never before grasp the meaning of the Cross, today realise that great ends are achieved in this world only by suffering. "By this teaching of Gandhi that they can joyously take on suffering for the sake of national ends,there has come into the atmosphere a new sensitiveness to the Cross.A brilliant Hindu thinker,writing on this subject said,'what the missionaries have not been able to do in fifty years,Gandhi,by his life and trial and incarceration has done,namely,he has turned the eyes of India toward the Cross'"[1].A Hindu nationalist leader,formerly a fiery opponent of Christianity,has voiced the confession of all India when he said'I never understood the meaning of Christianity,until I saw it in Gandhi'.

The Great Soul of India has many peculiarities that confirmed Christians may call faults.He himself admits to many. But in his supreme devotion to the poor,his courageous and sacrificial spirit,his unshaken trust in God,his unequalled

1.Christ of the Indian Road.Jones.p.79.

sincerety,and his utter reliance upon the power of Love in the conflict with evil,who could deny that the Spirit of the Great Galilean has been reborn?

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History raises a warning hand when one contemplates an estimation of the influence that the Great Soul of India may exert on future generations.Whether he would be regarded as the dying voice of deluded Nationalism,or whether he would take his place in the annals of mankind with such men as Buddha,Luther and St.Francis,or whether he would surpass them and be found an Incarnation of the Almighty,Posterity alone can decide.We,however,can safely assert that today Gandhi is the living argument for the Renaissance of Jesus in India.

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